

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BRASIL 02489 311452Z
ACTION SS-25

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BRASILIA 2489

EXDIS

EO 11652 GDS
TAGS: PFOR PGOV PINT BR US
SUBJECT: PUBLICATION OF PRESIDENTIAL LETTER

REF: STATE 070151, BRASILIA 2480

1. FOREIGN MINISTER SILVEIRA'S CHIEF OF CABINET, AMBASSADOR SOUTO MAIOR, RAISED WITH THE DCM LAST EVENING THE QUESTION OF PUBLISHING THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER HERE, SAYING THAT THERE WAS "SOME THINKING" IN THE GOB THAT PUBLICATION WOULD BE "A VERY GOOD THING IN THE LIGHT OF THE SITUATION IN OUR RELATIONS". THE DCM TOLD HIM THAT WITH PROTOCOLARY LETTERS WE GENERALLY RECEIVE SUCH AUTHORIZATION BUT THIS LETTER WAS A SPECIAL ONE TO GEISEL AND WE HAD HAD NO INDICATION THAT THE WHITE HOUSE HAD CONSIDERED THE IDEA OF PUBLICATION. THE DCM ADDED THAT WE WOULD CHECK WITH WASHINGTON.

2. WE RECOMMEND FIRMLY AGAINST PUBLICATION. IN MAKING THE RECOMMENDATION, WE REALIZE THAT THERE MIGHT BE A POSITIVE EFFECT ON THE GENERAL ENVIRONMENT FROM MAKING THE LETTER PUBLIC, AND OUR ACQUIESCENCE MIGHT ENHANCE THE CHANCES OF ACCEPTANCE OF THE "NON-DISCUSSIONS".

3. THERE ARE EVEN STRONGER REASONS FOR NOT AUTHORIZING PUBLICATION. IN THE FIRST PLACE, GEISEL APPEARS ABOUT TO
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TAKE MEASURES, OR A SERIES OF MEASURES, UNDER HIS SWEEPING POWERS AGAINST THE OPPOSITION AS A RESULT OF ITS REFUSAL TO VOTE FOR WHAT IT CONSIDERED TOTALLY INADEQUATE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS ON JUDICIAL REFORM (BRASILIA 2481). AT THE LEAST THE CONGRESS WILL BE CLOSED FOR A PERIOD IN ORDER TO PERMIT THE CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES BY PRESIDENTIAL FIAT. THE MEASURES MAY ENCOMPASS THE CHANGING OF THE

ELECTIONS OF 1978 FROM DIRECT, AS CALLED FOR BY THE TERMS OF THE PRESENT CONSTITUTION, TO INDIRECT ONES IN ORDER TO GUARANTEE AGAINST AN AREANA DEFEAT. THEY MAY ALSO INVOLVE THE CASSATION OF A LARGE NUMBER OF OPPOSITION DEPUTIES AND SENATORS. WE BELIEVE THAT THE GOB MAY WELL WANT TO USE THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER TO OFFSET THE REACTIONS TO THESE HARSH ACTIONS BY SUGGESTING THAT EVERYTHING IS FINE IN US-BRAZILIAN RELATIONS OR EVEN TO TRY TO ASSOCIATE THE PRESIDENT SOMEHOW WITH THE GOB AT THIS JUNCTURE IN THE INTERNAL SITUATION. THE EFFECTS ON THOSE BRAZILIANS WHO, FOR EXAMPLE, QUIETLY SUPPORT THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION'S HUMAN RIGHTS POSITION WOULD BE NEGATIVE.

4. WE ARE ALSO CONCERNED THAT THE GOB MAY WANT TO PORTRAY THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER AS A VICTORY FOR THE GOB TOUGH LINE WITH US (SEE BRASILIA 2214). IT WILL BE NOTED THAT PUBLICATION WILL IMMEDIATELY CREATE PRESSURES FOR THE RELEASE OF THE STRONG MARCH 9 GEISEL LETTER, AND THE GOB MAY BE ONLY TOO READY TO RELEASE THAT LETTER IN ORDER TO ENHANCE THE APPEARANCE OF "VICTORY".

5. ANOTHER NEGATIVE FACTOR IS THAT GEISEL WILL BE MAKING A SPEECH TODAY, THE THIRTEENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE 1964 REVOLUTION. THE SPEECH MAYBE A HARD-LINE ONE WITH RESPECT TO INTERNAL AFFAIRS. ANNIVERSARY RHETORIC IS USUALLY INFLAMED, AND THE RECENT INTERNAL DEVELOPMENTS WOULD CALL FOR A STEPPING-UP.

6. THE INDICATORS THAT THE GOB HAS ITS OWN
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SPECIAL REASONS FOR SUGGESTING THE UNUSUAL PROCEDURE OF PUBLICATION ARE REENFORCED BY THE FACT THAT IT VERY CAREFULLY DID NOT PUBLISH THE EXCHANGE OF PROTOCOLARY GREETINGS BETWEEN THE PRESIDENTS ON THE INAUGURATION OF PRESIDENT CARTER.

7. FOR ALL THESE REASONS, WE BELIEVE THAT WE SHOULD REPLY TO SOUTO MAIOR THAT THE LETTER WAS A PERSONAL, PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL COMMUNICATION NOT WRITTEN FOR PUBLICATION AND THAT WE CONSIDER IT IMPORTANT TO MAINTAIN THE PRIVACY OF EXCHANGES BETWEEN PRESIDENTS SO THAT THE CHANNEL CAN BE SUBSTANTIVELY USEFUL.

8. PLEASE ADVISE.

9. WE HAVE JUST LEARNED THAT THE GIST OF THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER IS BEING CARRIED IN THE SAO PAULO AND RIO PRESS. THIS DELIBERATE BREACH OF CONFIDENCE ONLY CONFIRMS THE SPECIAL GOB PURPOSES. IF WE ARE ASKED ABOUT A LETTER, WE WILL SIMPLY SAY THAT

WE DO NOT DISCUSS COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN PRESIDENTS. WE
WOULD APPRECIATE IMMEDIATE ADVICE ABOUT THE DEPARTMENT'S
PRESS LINE.
CRIMMINS

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NNN

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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